

File under Klawak *Edward Mersden*
Saxman and Klawak

COPY.

Saxman, Alaska, August, 1900.

Rev. C. L. Thompson, D. D.,
156 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C.

My dear Sir:-

It is with a sincere pleasure that I now write to you this report on my recent missionary journey to the Islands of Prince of Wales and Kupreanoff and also to Sitka.

On the 2nd of August I left this place in company with my engineer and deckhand, three of us in the party; and, after calling at Metlakahtla for some provisions and coal, proceeded on to Moira Sound and North Arm, two of the Indian Camps. From these places we turned north, calling occasionally as we went along at some of the white and Indian camps. We reached Point Barre and Kake Village in due time. Here I met with the Kake people and held conferences with them. They are being helped by the Friends Missionary Society. I noticed that they were anxious for more light and I was glad to preach to them.

From Kake Village we went direct to Sitka, and here we remained over a week. If it were earlier in the summer, I could also have visited Hoonah and Chilkat. But

But the object of my trip was the west side of Prince of Wales Island. Hence, we weighed anchor again and headed for Shakan which place we reached after a full two days' run from Sitka. As soon as I landed at Shakan, I at once asked the natives to come together for a conference, which request they complied with very heartily. I talked with them and asked them many questions. They answered me satisfactorily. One thing worthy of notice about the Shakan people is that they have learned to respect and keep the Sabbath, although they have never had the benefits of the Gospel. This they did from the example set by native Christians either from Sitka, Howcan or Wrangle. There is a large saw mill at Shakan owned by white men, and this gives employment to many of the natives.

We left Shakan and after calling for a brief time at Tuxecan, arrived at Klawak. For some years I have been wishing to visit Klawak as I knew the people to be anxious for the light. You can readily see that I was very glad to be there at last, and the burden of this letter is with the people of Klawak. They have been looking for me for sometime, and as soon as we called word was sent around that I had arrived. They at once assembled in a certain house that was used for their meetings, and in this assembly I talked freely with the people and they did the same with me.

Before I explain to you the situation at Klawak, a word concerning the place and people seems appropriate. Klawak is situated about half way on the West side of Prince of Wales Island. It is seventy miles north of Jackson and eighty from Shakan. As I understand it, the site is not the site of the old Klawak. It is well protected from the severe winds and large steamers can enter its harbor. There are some salmon streams near by, and from these streams the cannery at that place gets some of its fish. The people are very thrifty, and I was informed that they make excellent hands in the cannery and on the steamers. They raise but very little vegetables. They live in comfortable houses(cottages). Once the Government maintained among them a day school, but owing

to lack of funds the school was discontinued some four years ago. Once in a long while some native Christian and some missionary would give them a short visit. Until this last winter and fall, they were very much addicted to the use of rum. But a young man by the name of William Benson, who was at once time a pupil at the Sitka School, came to them and instituted among them a Christian work according to the methods of the Salvation Army. Although he himself was so limited in his training and so limited in his knowledge of God's Word, yet with a full, consecrated heart and a determined will to win them to the Saviour, he commenced his earnest labors labors, and he has now nearly all the Klawak for the Master. Thus I was so pleased to be with the people and they were so willing to listen to me.

I observed this field carefully, and I noticed that it needs the services of a regular missionary. This is the prevailing sentiment of the people themselves. They are about two hundred in number, and nearly all of this number is Christian, although not of course in the highest degree. They have altogether discontinued their rum habits; their girls are endeavored to be protected against the lustful white men; they rest and worship on the Sabbath day; they hold prayer meetings three times a week. I noticed that the seed is sown in their midst; and this is all that William Benson can do, to sow in their hearts as best as he can the few seeds allowed him to have. But they need a missionary. They cry for him. They want him to come. I repeated my questions of their need of a missionary in their hearing so that I could be sure of an answer. They unanimously replied after the same manner. They cry for a missionary.

I asked them: "How about the missionary at Howcan? Will you be satisfied if he visits you once a month?"

They responded: "We all want him to come and visit us once a month; but it will be very hard on him and his people. He has to travel seventy miles, and in a bad weather his travel will be attended with unforeseen dangers. His people at Howcan needs his continuous services and attention, and would only be too glad to see him here and listen to the Gospel that he may preach."

I again said: "This being the case, you all and each one of you here at Klawak, then, earnestly pray for the continuous services and attention of a new missionary?"

"We do earnestly pray for his coming", they responded.

"Let us all pray for your new missionary", I closed, "but you will know this, brethren, that the finding and sending of a new missionary is no easy thing. You must wait and see what the Lord will do for you. You must wholly trust and love Him. You must leave all other things behind and walk faithfully in His way. He will listen and answer your prayers."

The Klawak people further desired the reopeing of the day school, and of this matter I shall communicate with the Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.

After we completed all our conferences, I left Klawak, and on the way home I visited Jackson, Klinguan and Hunter's Bay. Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery were getting along nicely. I was pleased to see them and to impart with them my experiences on the whole journey.

The whole distance of our trip was 800 miles and the time

for this was three weeks. Only once the vessel struck a reef, and this was in an unexplored region. We encountered two heavy storms, the last one nearly disabled our rudder. Excepting these, our missionary travel was met with no accident. The "Marietta" consumed only three tons of coal during the whole tour, and together with the hire of the engineer and deck hand my expenses ran up to \$66.70. I consider this very economical when I think of the work we accomplished among the out-of-the-way peoples, the distance and time we traveled and used. The fare of two persons from here to Sitka and return on the large steamship is \$72, and then they only hurry as fast as the ship can carry them. I shall never change for the use of my steam vessel for missionary purposes, but I only expect to be helped with my actual expenses. My actual expenses on this trip was \$66.70 (3 tons of coal \$30, engineer and deck hand ^{each} \$18 and machine oil 70¢).

I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Edward Maesden,
Missionary.

West Sound Wash
August 2nd 1897

Rev George M^cAfee

Dear Sir

I write you for information.
I am located at Daxman -
Alaska as Government Teacher
Was sent there by Dr Jackson
and in accordance with
his orders I have surveyed
and had recorded one mile
square of land for Mission
purposes which includes the
town of Daxman. It is
recorded at Sitka for the Pres-
byterian Board of Home Missions
in the United States

Dr Jackson tells me to keep
white men from coming
and settling and building on
the said mile square but
some white men say they will
come and build their houses

2 there and live there in spite
of me or Dr Jackson and that
there is no law to prevent
them doing so.

Please tell me what authority
I can exercise in the matter
and if you can give me any
authority I wish you would
do so as we want to keep
our town free from everything
that would harm the natives
or hinder the Mission work.

Please address me at West
Sound Wash till the 20th
of August as I start to Alaska
about the 25th.

J W Young

8/10/97 Instructions were given to
warn off intruders, & copy sent of
Act of Congress as authority.

Closed School at Jackson

Dictated by Bro. F. W. Beebe

New York, May 15th, 1896.

Rev. J. L. Gould,

Jackson, Alaska.

My dear Brother Gould:-

I assure you that it gives me no pleasure to be obliged to write you this morning the action of the Board at its last meeting in regard to the work at Hydah. During my absence, being ill last winter, the action was taken ordering the closing of the school at Hydah after the expiration of this present school year. When I returned to the office, I found other letters had come from Hydah, which had induced the Woman's Executive Committee to ask for a reconsideration. The matter was reconsidered and held over for further information, hoping that I might be able to visit the field. The Board, however, decided that they would await the final returns from the church and see what our financial condition was going to be, before they took definite and final action in the case.

The books are closed, the returns are all in, and we find that our debt is not diminished, but rather increased. The "Million Dollar Memorial Fund" has not materialized yet, but we hope it will in the near future. Nevertheless, after all our cutting down last year on various fields to the extent of \$63,000.,

we are still behind our receipts from seventeen to twenty thousand dollars on the present year's work. When the Board came to face these facts at the last meeting, they issued positive orders to cut down our work from 30 to 40 % all over the field, and specified that the Boarding Department at Hydah should for one year at least be closed. The action was as follows:

First, close the Boarding Department at Hydah at the end of the present school year (say July 1st).

Second, that Mrs. Mc Farland and Mrs. Gould be continued at \$500. and \$300. respectively, and asked to continue the missionary work in connection with the Mission, and that Mrs. Mc Farland have charge of the building in which she is to live, and that the Government teacher be permitted to occupy apartments in the same building also.

Third, that Miss Manning be transferred to Sitka.

Fourth, that such girls and boys, to a limited number, who may have no homes, will be transferred with Miss Manning to Sitka.

You now have the action of the Board, from which there seems to be no appeal. There has been every effort possible made to prevent cutting down our work anywhere, but such is the state of the Treasury that it becomes an absolute necessity. In order that these girls who may not have homes be provided for, the action was taken as above, that they be transferred to Sitka, if they desire to go. I will write Prof. Shull of Sitka, telling him of this order and instructing him to communicate with you if there are such as may be sent to him upon your recommendation.

My dear brother, it would give me a great deal more pleasure to write you that not only the school would be continued as before, but that we could give additional facilities that you might enlarge your work among that people, but we have no option in the matter, as we are simply the Executive officers of the Board, and must carry out their injunctions.

I declined going to Alaska because of our financial ~~bad~~ ~~finan-~~ condition, not desiring to lay upon the Woman's Executive Committee the expense of such a trip. It may not be possible for me to go this year fr^p the same reason, but may rest assured that if I go to Alaska I shall surely visit you, and shall be glad to talk over this whole matter with you and see what can be done for the future. By no means does this action indicate that this is to be the end of the work at Hydah. We hope that your Mission work will be far more successful than it has been in the past, and that the Board will remove all difficulties in the way by continuing that work in the very best possible way and to the great advantage of that people.

If you could only be in the office and know and hear what has been done and said in regard to your work and our school at Hydah, you would certainly have sympathy with our good ladies in the great distress into which they have been thrown by their financial troubles. You would also know that they have the deepest sympathy with you in your work, and it causes them as much sorrow as it can possibly cause you and the workers at Hydah to carry out

this instruction given them by the Board.

I most sincerely hope and pray that in the future we can enlarge our work so as to do our duty to that people, yet we are just at the present time in such a condition that we are obliged in order to avoid disaster to stop where we are. Will you kindly give the teachers mentioned, notice of this action of the Board?

Fraternally yours,

Geo F McAfee

Dna. T. F. May 7

RECD APR 30 1913

ANPD

BY Miss Julia Fraser,
156 Fifth Ave.

New York City,

Sitka, Alaska.

April 15, 1913.

My Dear Miss Fraser,

Your letter of March the

27th asking for more information about the girl whose picture was taken in native costume and in a dress she had made, has been handed to me, because I was responsible for the picture.

The girls name is Linnie Cooke and it is my pleasure to sing her praises, but I shall have to spoil a good story by admitting that native costumes have not been used for fifteen years. I merely wanted to show the difference between the girl of that time and the girl of the present.

Linnie Cooke is one of the really splendid girls in the school. She does almost perfect work in all departments and is a joy to our hearts at all times. She has been attending

this school five years and is a very earnest student. She is a high caste Klinket and has lived in Sotha most of her life. Her father is an elder in the native church, her mother a good Christian woman and thoroughly in sympathy with Linnie's desire for a good education.

When Linnie came into my classes I found she could do beautiful work, her technique was above criticism. She was given simple drafts and as soon as possible she had the skirt, waist and sleeve draft. I gave these drafts by dictation and demonstration and Linnie's pattern did not need any correction. That little calico dress was her first product. She is painstaking and conscientious and also naturally clever with her fingers. This year her work has of course been more advanced and one of our teachers is proudly wearing a silk waist which she and Phoebe Midmark made.

Linnie's parents live in the cottage settlement and Linnie lives at home

Saxman Re...

are Missionary Effort
By
Emory F. Tobin

(Reprint from Ketchikan Alaska Chronicle, Saturday, January 29, 1921)

Miss Sheibler

In B. Gen'l
Alaska

"From a community where intemperance and the practice of such things as pot-latching were the rule, the town of Saxman, three miles south of Ketchikan, has within the past year been revived into a progressive town, whose every inhabitant has followed the straight and narrow path, and where not a sign of the old evils has been evident.

During the past winter the 125 people there have repaired the church, the Salvation Army hall, and many of the houses, and are planning the introduction of electricity and other improvements. Yet in spite of these measures for good on the part of the inhabitants, thirty children are growing up in ignorance there owing to the failure of the government in the last eight years to furnish teachers.

The town of Saxman is inhabited only three months of the year. These are the months of November, December and January. Beginning about the first of February the people scatter, going to many other quarters on their fishing or hunting expeditions. During the rest of the year it is practically deserted.

In the six winters previous to last winter, this season of the year, when all the native inhabitants were at home, was spent to a great extent in carousing and intemperance. No regular church services were held there and the community was entirely neglected by the government, as it is today.

With the coming of the Rev. F. R. Falconer, who revived the services of the Presbyterian church there during the winter of 1919 and continued them this season, the town has transformed itself and the evil is no longer tolerated. The town government has reorganized itself under a mayor and council of seven, and is doing good administrative work.

Every member of the community as far as can be determined, has been a church-goer during the past three months and they have put the house of worship back in order after it had fallen into a state of delapidation. For nearly seven years it

had been entirely neglected and unused. Now the roof has been reshingled, the collapsed stairway to the church rebuilt, and the interior put back into shape.

Appeals for School Fail

There is a good government school building in the village, but this during the past seven or eight years has been unoccupied. Appeals to the United States Bureau of Education by Rev. Mr. Falconer for a teacher have been without avail, the bureau considering the time the children are there too short for the inauguration again of school activities and the difficulty of getting a teacher for so short a time too great.

As a consequence of the lack of schooling it is said the natives there show a greater proportion of illiteracy than any similar community in Alaska. The parents have shown themselves eager to secure schooling for their children and have offered to let their children remain in the village, to go to school while they disperse to their various spring and summer occupations. During the coming year Rev. Mr. Falconer intends to make further efforts to secure a teacher for the school, this time through the Territorial Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Henderson.

Back to Old Customs

Following the Rev. Mr. Marsdon's transfer to Metlakatla and the Ketchikan stations in 1912, no missionary was sent to the village until Rev. Mr. Falconer took up the work. The natives to a great degree went back to their old customs and intemperance grew.

The practice of pot-latching was resumed, and many a native lost his accumulated wealth of years of work through one such festival. Numerous deaths caused an increase in general depression, and in pot-latching.

According to the old native chiefs, when a member of their tribe died, he traveled to the happy hunting grounds, first passing through a large forest. Then he would come to a large lake and there he could see across to the land of joy, with happy sprites dancing merrily. On the opposite shore there would be a boat-man with his craft. Thought the traveler called again and again in a loud voice, the boat-man, so the story goes, would

make no sign, till at last, the spirit of the departed would become tired and lie down preparatory to going to sleep. Then he would yawn, and the boat-man, hearing the yawn, would row over and get him.

Even when the traveler from the mortal world reached the other side his troubles would not be over, according to the belief, unless his friends or relatives here sent something to him. If he should go to a fire, the other spirits would warn him to keep away, because "no fire had been sent to him." If he should ask for a blanket, it would be denied because his mortal friends had sent none to him, and ~~so on~~, whether it was food or any other comfort or necessity.

The means his relatives had of sending articles to the departed, was by the custom of potlatching. The thought that a departed relative might be lacking some comfort because none had been sent him by his mortal relatives, secured a very strong hold on the adherents of the old religion, and if some one had recently died his relatives would have no peace of mind until they had done away with their own goods through the pot-latch, which consisted of destroying or giving away all the goods the dead person might require. So long as the living relatives had use of any article, the spirit of the dead would not.

Christianity Once More.

This belief has practically disappeared now and is no longer practiced at Saman and very little elsewhere."